NET NOW

STOP THE INSANITY—AND THE JUNK MAIL

If your real-world mailbox is overflowing with catalogs, credit-card offers, and other straight-to-the-garbage clutter, **Stopthejunkmail.com** ***(www.stopthejunkmail.com)*** can help stem the tide of trash. For a $10 annual fee, the site will send a legal notice to each junk-mailer that you select, requiring that company to remove you from its mailing list.

In most cases, you can delete yourself from mailing lists for free—if you've got the time to call or write to a company and request removal. "Most people get seven to 15 pieces of junk mail a day, so to call or write each of them is an enormous burden," says Michael Kranitz, president of Stopthejunkmail.com. "The site allows them to do in minutes what it would take hours to do."

Although Stopthejunkmail.com can contact more than 4,000 catalog companies on your behalf, the site can't help if a catalog isn't on its list, and many are not.

Still, the service can be worthwhile, says Jason Catlett, president of **Junkbusters** ***(www.junkbusters.com)***, a privacy advocacy organization. "I'm generally in favor of anything that lessens the massive burden of junk that's dumped continuously onto Americans," he says. "Personally, I grind my teeth at the idea of paying for peace, quiet, and privacy, but many people consider it well worth a few dollars."

To help defray the deforestation caused by all that junk mail, a portion of each membership fee goes to help the **American Forests Organization** ***(www.americanforests.org)*** plant a tree in North America. Stopthejunkmail.com has made donations to plant 500 trees and hopes to help plant 90,000 more by year's end. —*Kevin Savetz*

Send Instant Gratification

Want to send a gift to someone you've never met? It's easy, if you use the **Odigo** instant-messaging (IM) platform. Odigo ***(www.odigo.com)*** now allows users to send gifts using just an IM screen name.

After downloading the Instant Gift plug-in from the Odigo site, the sender selects an IM address and chooses a gift from the catalog. Odigo sends a message to the recipient asking if that person wants to accept the gift. If the answer is yes, Odigo gathers the required information and sends the present, but doesn't share the shipping information with the sender.

Odigo goes from buddy list to gift list.

"The immediacy of being able to target someone on your buddy list and send them anything from a $10 box of cookies to a $60 flower arrangement is a unique quality," says Alex Diamandis, vice president of sales and marketing at Odigo. Diamandis says IM users can have from 10 to 100 people on their buddy lists, and Instant Gifts saves them the trouble of looking up addresses.

"A lot of matchmaking and flirtation goes on through IM," he says, noting that the service gives users a safe way to send that special something to that special, if anonymous, someone.

Others doubt the viability of the concept. "I don't think there will be a great deal of faith in the promise of anonymity," says Robert Mahowald, a senior analyst at IDC. "Only those who truly don't care who gets their home address will go ahead and give it out." —*Elaine X. Grant*

VALUE LINE DIGITAL CAMERAS

A sampling of digital snapshooters found on computershopper.com

Fujifilm MX-1200 $249
1.3 megapixels, 8MB SmartMedia card, 1,280-by-960 resolution, does not accept additional lenses, serial interface, 1.4 pounds

Olympus Camedia C-2040 Zoom $369
2.1 megapixels, 8MB SmartMedia card, 1,600-by-1,200 resolution, video capture, accepts additional lenses, USB interface, 10.9 ounces

Nikon Coolpix 990 $769
3.3 megapixels, 16MB CompactFlash card (Type I), 2,048-by-1,536 resolution, video capture, accepts additional lenses, USB and serial interfaces, 1.2 pounds

Canon PowerShot Pro90 IS $805
2.6 megapixels, 16MB CompactFlash card (Type I or II), 1,856-by-1,392 resolution, video capture, accepts additional lenses, USB interface, 1.5 pounds

$250 | $500 | $750 | $1,000

Kodak DC280 $339
2 megapixels, 8MB CompactFlash card (Type I), 1,760-by-1,168 resolution, accepts additional lenses, USB and serial interfaces, 1 pound

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-P1 $579
3.3 megapixels, 8MB Memory Stick, 2,048-by-1,536 resolution, video capture, does not accept additional lenses, USB interface, 8.8 ounces

Epson PhotoPC 3000Z $782
3.3 megapixels, 16MB CompactFlash card (Type I), 2,048-by-1,536 resolution, video capture, accepts additional lenses, USB and serial interfaces, 1.2 pounds

Olympus Camedia C-2040 Zoom

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